

IN THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Currently Amended) Connection apparatus for a network tester or analyser, the connection apparatus comprising:

at least two network connection devices for connecting the apparatus to a network, each connection device being constructed and arranged to output serial electrical signals corresponding to signals received from a network to which the connection apparatus is in use connected; and,

at least two solid state switches, each solid state switch being constructed and arranged to receive serial electrical signals output by a respective one of the network connection devices and to output a corresponding serial electrical signal;

wherein each solid state switch ~~being~~ is controllable such that electrical signals corresponding to signals received from a said network can selectively be output by the solid state switch and received at the other or another of the solid state switches for return to a said network by said other or another of the solid state switches.

2. (Original) Connection apparatus according to claim 1, comprising a respective serial-to-parallel data converter for each solid state switch, each serial-to-parallel data converter being constructed and arranged to receive a serial electrical signal corresponding to signals received from a said network that is output by the respective solid state switch and to convert the received serial electrical signal into parallel form.

3. (Previously Presented) Connection apparatus according to claim 1, wherein each solid state switch is constructed and arranged to retime electrical signals received from the other or another of the solid state switches prior to returning said electrical signals to a said network.

4. (Previously Presented) Connection apparatus according to claim 1, wherein at least one of the solid state switches is a port bypass circuit.

5. (Original) Connection apparatus according to claim 4, wherein each solid state switch is a port bypass circuit.

6. (Previously Presented) Connection apparatus according to claim 1, wherein each network connection device is constructed and arranged to receive optical signals from an optical network and to convert the received optical signals into serial electrical form for output to the respective solid state switch.

7. (Currently Amended) Connection apparatus for network testers and analysers, the connection apparatus comprising:

two network connection devices for connecting the apparatus to a network, each connection device being constructed and arranged to output serial electrical signals corresponding to signals received from a network to which the connection apparatus is in use connected; and,

two port bypass circuits, each port bypass circuit having at least three output ports, each port bypass circuit being constructed and arranged to receive serial electrical signals output by a respective one of the network connection devices and to output a corresponding serial electrical signal on a first of its output ports;

wherein each port bypass circuit being is controllable such that electrical signals corresponding to signals received from a said network can selectively be output on a second of the output ports of the port bypass circuit and received at the other port bypass circuit for return to a said network via a third of the output ports of the other port bypass circuit.

8. (Original) Connection apparatus according to claim 7, comprising a respective serial-to-parallel data converter for each port bypass circuit, each serial-to-parallel data converter being constructed and arranged to receive a serial electrical signal corresponding to signals received from a said network that is output on the first port of the respective port bypass circuit and to convert the received serial electrical signal into parallel form.

9. (Previously Presented) Connection apparatus according to claim 7, wherein each port bypass circuit is constructed and arranged to retime electrical signals received from the other or another of the port bypass circuits prior to returning said electrical signals to a said network.

10. (Previously Presented) A network tester comprising connection apparatus according to claim 7 so that the network tester can selectively be operated in in-line or end station mode when connected to a network.

11. (Previously Presented) A network analyser comprising connection apparatus according to claim 7 so that the network analyser can selectively be operated in in-line or end station mode when connected to a network.

12. (Original) A method of operating connection apparatus for a network tester or analyser, the connection apparatus comprising at least two network connection devices for connecting the apparatus to a network, each connection device being constructed and arranged to output serial electrical signals corresponding to signals received from the network; and, at least two solid state switches, each solid state switch being constructed and arranged to receive serial electrical signals output by a respective one of the network connection devices and to output a corresponding serial electrical signal; the method comprising:

selectively controlling each solid state switch such that electrical signals corresponding to signals received from the network are output by the solid state switch and received at the other or another of the solid state switches for return to the network by said other or another of the solid state switches whereby the apparatus operates in in-line mode, or such that electrical signals corresponding to signals received from the network and output by each solid state switch are not received at the other or another of the solid state switches whereby the apparatus operates in end station mode.

13. (Original) A method according to claim 12, comprising converting from serial to parallel form a serial electrical signal corresponding to signals received from the network that is output by one of the solid state switches.

14. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 12, comprising retiming electrical signals received from the other or another of the solid state switches prior to returning said electrical signals to the network.

15. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 12, wherein at least one of the solid state switches is a port bypass circuit.

16. (Original) A method according to claim 15, wherein each solid state switch is a port bypass circuit.

17. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 12, comprising receiving optical signals from an optical network at each network connection device and converting the received optical signals into serial electrical form for output to the respective solid state switch.

18. (Original) A method of operating connection apparatus for network testers and analysers, the connection apparatus comprising: two network connection devices for connecting the apparatus to a network, each connection device being constructed and arranged to output serial electrical signals corresponding to signals received from a network to which the connection apparatus is in use connected; and, two port bypass circuits, each port bypass circuit having at least three output ports, each port bypass circuit being constructed and arranged to receive serial electrical signals output by a respective one of the network connection devices and to output a corresponding serial electrical signal on a first of its output ports; the method comprising:

selectively controlling each port bypass circuit such that electrical signals corresponding to signals received from the network are output on a second of the output ports of the port bypass circuit and received at the other port bypass circuit for return to the network via a third of the output ports of the other port bypass circuit whereby the apparatus operates in in-line mode, or such that electrical signals corresponding to signals received from the network and output by each port bypass circuit are not received at the other port bypass circuit whereby the apparatus operates in end station mode.

19. (Original) A method according to claim 18, comprising converting from serial to parallel form a serial electrical signal corresponding to signals received from the network that is output on the first port of one of the port bypass circuits.

20. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 18, comprising retiming electrical signals received from the other or another of the port bypass circuits prior to returning said electrical signals to the network.

21. (Previously Presented) A network tester comprising connection apparatus according to claim 1 so that the network tester can selectively be operated in in-line or end station mode when connected to a network.

22. (Previously Presented) A network analyser comprising connection apparatus according to claim 1 so that the network analyser can selectively be operated in in-line or end station mode when connected to a network.